

deserve our commendation for their selfless efforts to preserve such a threatened religious community, and in fact, the number of Jews living in Bulgaria actually increased during the Holocaust.

Bulgaria's record of tolerance was distorted by 40 years of communist misrule which culminated in the 1984–89 forcible assimilation campaign against its largest minority, the Turks. One of the first initiatives of the government following the fall of communism in November 1989 was the reversal of this brutal campaign. A return to the wholesale suppression of minority groups as exemplified by the forcible assimilation campaign is inconceivable today, and Bulgaria is a democracy that promotes respect for fundamental rights.

Last year, Bulgaria's Ambassador to the United States, Elena Poptodorova, testified before the Helsinki Commission regarding the ongoing efforts of her government to promote tolerance, consistent with Bulgaria's historical traditions. I have been particularly encouraged by Bulgaria's initiatives, in cooperation with leading non-governmental organizations, to promote the integration of Roma and non-Roma in schools. This work deserves the full support of the Bulgarian Government.

I am disappointed, however, that the Bulgarian Government has not yet adopted and implemented comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, even though it pledged to do so in early 1999 in a platform of action on Roma issues, and committed to do so in the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit document. Four years have come and gone since Bulgaria made those pledges, and it is past time for those pledges to be honored.

I am hopeful the Bulgarian Government will do more to combat violence motivated by racial or religious intolerance. Two cases of such violence, against Romani Pentecostals in Pazardjik, appear to have received only superficial attention from the authorities.

Madam Speaker, I also was disappointed to learn of the recent passage of a new religion law in Bulgaria. Several drafts of a religion law had laid relatively dormant until the last months of 2002, when the process was expedited. As a result, it is my understanding that minority faith communities were excluded from the drafting process and assurances to have the Council of Europe review the text again were ignored. The law is prejudiced against certain religious groups and falls well short of Bulgaria's OSCE commitments. The law also jeopardizes the legal status of the Orthodox synod not favored by the Government and its property holdings, as well as threatens fines for using the name of an existing religious organization without permission. New religious communities seeking to gain legal personality are now required to go through intrusive doctrinal reviews and cumbersome registration procedures, and co-religionists from abroad have been denied visas based on poorly written provisions.

Bulgaria's leadership on these various issues would be welcomed, especially in light of their plans to serve as Chair-in-Office of the OSCE in 2004. The United States is particularly appreciative of Bulgaria's firm stand against terrorism at this time, and we look forward to continued strong relations between our countries. The proud heritage stemming from the days of the Holocaust serves as a good reminder of the importance of taking stands which are right and true. Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased that this Congress is able to recognize that heritage and historical fact.

A TRIBUTE TO MARY BOGER, 29TH
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WOMAN OF THE YEAR—2003

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the accomplishments made by our nation's most distinguished women during the month of March. It is my great honor to recognize extraordinary women who are making a difference in my district.

I stand today, to recognize an outstanding woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Ms. Mary W. Boger. Ms. Boger's passion for community volunteerism, especially on behalf of children and education, has made the City of Glendale and surrounding areas a better place in which to live.

A product of the Glendale Unified School District, she attended Pasadena City College, then had a successful career in the business world. Mary and her husband, Dr. Donald Boger have raised eight children in total: JoAnn, Terry, Debbie, Scott, Elizabeth, Melanie, David, Charles, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

A strong advocate of education, Ms. Boger has served on numerous school committees and task forces, including Citizens for Glendale Community College, and the School Facilities Bond Committee. In addition, she has volunteered with the Glendale Parent Teacher Association, Glendale Healthy Kids, Verdugo Hills Visiting Nurse Association, Safe Places and Glendale Youth Coalition. She is currently a member of the Glendale Unified School District Board of Education, serves on the Glendale YWCA Board of Directors, and is President of Las Candelas.

Mary has received many awards, including the Glendale News Press Woman of Achievement Award in 1998, the California Legislature's 43rd Assembly District Woman of the Year in 2000, and the Glendale Community College Alumni Association's Award of Merit for Career Achievement and Community Service.

The time, energy and love she gives to our community is extraordinary, and the residents of my district have benefited greatly from her dedicated service.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in honoring a remarkable woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Mary W. Boger. The entire community joins me in thanking Mary Boger for her continued efforts to make the 29th Congressional District a healthier and safer environment, especially for children, in which to live.

FAMILY FARM AND RANCH INNOVATION ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today, I am again introducing legislation to help en-

sure our nation's family farms and ranches continue to produce the agricultural products that have made us the breadbasket for the world.

Small family farms and ranches helped build the foundation of America. Thomas Jefferson once wrote in a letter to George Washington, "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness." Today many small farms and ranches have disappeared. This is in part because the smaller farms and ranches have not been able to change to more profitable means of production. To continue as a viable business in agriculture farmers and ranchers need to be able to use modern techniques that increase profitability, and do it in a manner that is environmentally sound.

The Family Farm and Ranch Innovation Act (FFRJA) would provide necessary tools for small agriculture businesses to modernize and become more competitive in today's market, access to credit and a plan to turn the credit into increased revenue.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Commission on Small Farms report titled A Time to Act found, "The underlying trend toward small farm decline reflects fundamental technological and market changes. Simply put, conventional agriculture adds less and less value to food and fiber on the farm and more and more in the input and post-harvest sectors. We spend more on capital and inputs to enable fewer people to produce the Nation's food and look primarily to off farm processing to produce higher value products. Sustainable agriculture strives to change this trend by developing knowledge and strategies by which farmers can capture a large share of the agricultural dollar by using management skills to cut input costs—so a large share of the prices they receive for their products remain in their own pockets—and by producing products of higher value right from the farm." (In context of the report farms include ranches.)

The innovation plans in FFRIA, to be developed with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, would provide the blueprints to increase the value of farm and ranch outputs.

The report also found, "Agricultural operations require high levels of committed capital to achieve success. The capital-intensive nature of agricultural production makes access to financial capital, usually, in the form of credit, a critical requirement. Small farms are no different from larger farms in this regard, but testimony and USDA reports received by this Commission indicate a general under-capitalization of small farms, and increased difficulty in accessing sources of credit." If small farms and ranches are going to use improved technologies laid out in innovation plans they will need capital. The Small Business Administration's 7(a) loan program has a long history of helping small businesses and would be a great tool for small farmers and ranchers to implement their plans.

America's small farms and ranches need a hand up to remain viable in our rapidly changing marketplace. Often today's small agriculture businesses are family owned and have only a very small profit margin. The combination of low market prices for raw agricultural commodities and the rising cost of land means that many of these businesses cannot afford